

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SUPREME COURT

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To the members of the New Hampshire Citizens Commission on the State Courts:

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the entire Supreme Court, to let you know that the Judicial Branch has completed its 6-month report to the Citizens Commission on the recommendations submitted to us in June. We hope that you can join us at the Supreme Court at 1:00 p.m. on January 26, 2007, when we plan to distribute hard copies of the report, and additional documents, to all commissioners and review our progress with you in detail. In the meantime, the report, and additional documents, are available on the Judicial Branch website at www.courts.state.nh.us.

Before I summarize our actions, I want to thank you once again for your valued contributions to the administration of justice in New Hampshire. Your efforts have had a profound impact on Judicial Branch planning and, more specifically, on our budget request for FY 2008 and 2009. Never before have so many people from such diverse backgrounds lent their talents and their expertise to the judicial planning process. You should be proud of your effort and the influence it will have for years to come.

Our report to you follows the categories established by the commission in its final report: Customer Service; Public Access; Alternative Dispute Resolution; Family Courts; Sentencing; and Judicial Branch Outreach. When we meet in January, you will see, however, that our response to your work and recommendations went even further than an accounting of where each proposal now stands.

My colleagues and I used your recommendations as a springboard for long-term strategic planning when we convened 24 judges and support staff in June in Portsmouth and asked them to develop a plan for the future of New Hampshire courts. This planning effort was facilitated by Citizens Commission member Eric Herr of Hill. The participant list was designed to include representatives from every part of the New Hampshire court system and the group brought together a wide variety of experiences and perspectives. Significantly, among the non-judicial employees at the table was a representative of the 17-member Staff Advisory

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Committee to the Chief Justice, a group whose voice has not previously been heard at Judicial Branch planning sessions.

In the course of planning, I asked the attendees to put aside their parochial interests and to develop a single vision for a unified court system committed to public service. In addition to the Citizens Commission recommendations, we also depended upon earlier planning work done by the Supreme Court Task Force on Self Representation, the Supreme Court Task Force on Public Access to Court Records, the Supreme Court Committee on Justice System Needs and Priorities, and the Supreme Court Security Commission. The planning group's final product, the Judicial Branch Strategic Plan, is also available on our website. It organizes Judicial Branch priorities under five major goals:

1. Work to serve and educate the public:

The Judicial Branch must respect and respond to multiple constituencies while also working to promote understanding of and respect for the rule of law.

2. Achieve progress through change:

The Judicial Branch must anticipate change and manage innovation to achieve progress.

3. Keep our courthouses safe:

The Judicial Branch must provide a safe and secure environment for all.

4. Recognize our staff as our most valuable resource:

The Judicial Branch must attract, develop, and retain talented personnel in every position.

5. Deliver results fairly and efficiently:

The Judicial Branch must improve the quality of justice with an efficient and effective delivery system.

The first step in implementation of our strategic initiatives is our FY 2008-2009 Budget request. The initiatives included in that request, and the priorities we set, were largely shaped by the work of the Commission. While a few of your recommendations have already been carried out at no cost and many are already underway; others depend on financial support from the Legislature. We have indicated in the report that some of the commission's recommendations fall under the responsibility of the Legislature. We will, however, continue to work cooperatively with others in state government, where appropriate, and we welcome your further input.

I plan to report back to the Commission in another six months to update you on our progress. In the meantime, I hope I can count on your continued interest and support for the Judicial Branch and your particular support as our budget request moves through the legislative process.

To members of the New Hampshire Citizens Commission

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I want to close by thanking you once again for all you have done on behalf of the Judicial Branch and the people we serve. I look forward to seeing all of you on January 26th. Best holiday wishes to you and your families.

Very truly yours,

John T. Broderick, Jr.
Chief Justice

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